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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to offer publicity ideas for college reading and study skills programs. Examined are such basic publicity materials as brochures, posters, slide-tape presentations, handouts, and newspaper articles. Sixty-one publicity ideas are suggested, including offering a study skills workshop to freshman athletes before school opens; explaining center programs to orientation counselors; setting up an information table at registration; meeting with readmitted students to explain center programs; setting up a display in the campus library; placing individualized posters in each college of the university; placing flyers in student mailboxes; and working with the foreign student advisor to reach internationals with course information. (TS)

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PUBLICIZING THE COLLEGE READING AND STUDY SKILLS PROGRAM

Lila Bruckner

The University of South Carolina

(A paper presented to the 1973 annual meeting of the National Reading Conference November 21, 1973, in Houston, Texas.)

Introduction

The response to an article on publicity ideas will largely depend on where the reader is located on the continuum of college reading centers. At one end are those where reading courses are mandatory for all students falling below a certain score on a screening device, be it the SAT, TABE, Nelson-Denny, or one of a dozen or more instruments. Enough students, or

CS002700

perhaps too many, are generally assured. The thought of attracting more is quickly rejected. On the other end, however, are those centers where students come voluntarily for help. There are no required courses. No credit is given. In between there are various combinations of voluntary, credit, and mandatory programs. The need is always present, but wherever students come on their own volition, publicity becomes essential in letting them know what is avaliable.

The Communication Skills Development Center of the University of South Carolina is part of the Counseling Bureau and under the Division of Student Affairs. It serves failing freshmen through 4.0 graduate students. It is located on the fringe of the campus. Most services are offered to students on a volunteer basis. To date no credit is given. Modest fees are charged for each program offered.

The phenomenal growth experienced by the CSDC is closely related to an increasing publicity effort. The purpose of this paper is to share with other centers publicity ideas that have worked for the CSDC and ideas that are planned for future implementation. First, a list of basic publicity materials seems in order. Then attention will be given to a wide variety of ways they and a few additional materials may be used.

Basic Publicity Materials

Brochures. An attractive soft-sell brochure printed on quality paper seems a must. It should describe programs in a general way and include directions for enrolling. If thoughtfully designed it can be used for two or more years. The color of ink may be changed for each printing. Up-to-date lists of programs available and class schedules may be inserted as appropriate.

Posters. A poster may be designed and photographed for production of multiple copies on various colors of card stock. Cost per poster is little more than the cost of the materials when ordered in quantities of one hundred or more.

An artistic student aide might also design individual posters with cartoon drawings that relate to specific schools of the university where they are displayed.

Slide-Tape Presentations. Two types of slide-tape packages are desirable. One would take five to ten minutes to present center programs available to students. Care should be taken to have the script and photography attractive to a wide range of students.

A brief slide-tape package designed to explain the center programs to parents, faculty, and administration is also needed. Local reading and study skill needs of the students could be included. It is important that the need for the center is recognized among the university community. Its support is essential.

Most colleges and universities have media specialists who will advise and assure a professional product.

Handouts. Reading and study skill handouts should be prepared for a variety of uses. Often these are mimeographed. Stencils are filed for reuse when the supply runs low. Colored paper increases the attractiveness. The present paper shortage will require using both sides of each sheet and care in selecting significant helps. Subjects could include notetaking, scheduling, test taking, reading rate, listening, and general study tips.

Newspaper Articles. Maintaining a good relationship with the student newspaper personnel is essential. The possibility for both free and paid articles in the newspaper are limited only by the imagination.

Sixty-One Publicity Ideas

1. Contact high-school counselors about programs available to incoming freshmen.
2. Present information on center programs to groups of college-bound high school seniors.
3. Plan a pre-college "clinic" or prep program in reading and study skills during the summer for incoming freshmen.
4. Offer a study skill workshop to the freshmen athletes before school opens.
5. Explain center programs to orientation counselors.
6. Include brochures in the freshmen orientation packets.
7. Use the slide-tape presentation during freshmen orientation.
8. Prepare a video-tape presentation for freshmen orientation that captures a discussion of study skill problems and needs by students who are already making the grade.
9. Provide a mini-course like "Effective Listening" as an option during freshmen orientation.
10. Encourage orientation counselors to include a brief stop at the center in their campus tour.
11. Set up an information table at the activity fair at registration.
12. Arrange a drawing at the registration information table for a free center course.
13. Send a letter of congratulations and class schedules to the course winners.
14. Send a letter to non-winners thanking them for their interest. Include a course schedule and offer a free hour in the learning lab.

15. Meet with readmitted students to explain center programs.
16. Provide program information to correctional institutions to assist ex-inmates enrolling in the university.
17. Talk with transfer students on regional campuses about center programs.
18. Attend the hall advisor workshop to explain programs that could be offered in residence halls.
19. Offer hall advisors discounts or free courses for arranging reading or study skill programs in their residences.
20. Maintain brochure and information areas in residence halls.
21. Set up a display in the campus library. Include brochures, schedules and study handouts.
22. Place a number of study and reading books on reserve at the library desk while the display is set up.
23. Provide attractive bookmarks at the library check-out with center information.
24. Keep brochures and schedules of courses at the student union information desk.
25. Place a poster with a pocket for class schedules in a prominent place in the student union.
26. Maintain an information table in the student union for the first week of each semester.
27. Place individualized posters in each college or division of the university.
28. Tape flyers inside restroom stalls offering a new or unusual program.
29. Plan an open house with refreshments in the center periodically. Demonstrate programs available.
30. Place new course information in the classified ads of the school newspaper.

31. Arrange for a feature article on the center with pictures in the newspaper.
32. Include course information in the newspaper.
33. Prepare unusual paid advertisements for the newspaper.
34. Publish a summary of program results in the newspaper at the end of each semester.
35. Prepare spot announcements for the campus radio station.
36. Work with information services on a feature article for the alumni newspaper.
37. Provide information on new classes or events for inclusion in the campus calendar.
38. Feature a new idea each month. In February offer a "Sweetheart Special." A couple may take a course for the price of one student.
39. Offer group reading or study skill tests at minimal rates or free.
40. Place flyers in student mailboxes.
41. Prepare completion cards or certificates for center classes.
42. Arrange for handouts or information sheets to be distributed in English and/or history classes.
43. Offer free help on test taking at exam time. Provide tapes for use in the lab or form one or two hour classes for group help.
44. Enlist the help of students who are enrolled in classes. Give them reduced rates on other courses for getting their friends enrolled.
45. Recruit a student advisory group to help in planning and outreach.
46. Arrange to speak briefly about center programs to university organizations.
47. Work with the foreign student advisor to reach internationals with course information.

48. Inform host families of reading and study skill help available to internationals.
49. Offer help to graduate students to pass advanced tests and sharpen writing skills.
50. Suggest special classes in listening for trainees in counseling and social work.
51. Work with the veterans' coordinator to let veterans know about available programs.
52. Meet with groups of mature women returning to the university to offer help in study skills.
53. Send letters and brochures once a year to alert faculty members to center services.
54. Arrange drop-ins for the faculty of each college or department.
55. Offer to faulty members help in teaching their students how to read their textbooks. This can be carried out during regular class periods.
56. Provide readability level checks of college textbooks to professors who request them.
57. Set up rapid reading courses for faculty and staff.
58. Form a faculty advisory council for the center.
59. Recruit faculty members to donate time occasionally to assist students in studying particular subjects.
60. Arrange for occasional feature articles on the center in local newspapers.
61. Arrange to be on talk shows on radio and TV to explain center programs to the community.

Of course, all of the ideas cannot be used each semester. Hopefully, each school will analyze its needs and select ideas appropriate to meet

those needs. Planning systematically with lead time enough to carry out the plans is essential.